

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: August 27, 2007

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 12: Consideration of resolution authorizing a Conservancy Fund grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to assist the National Park Service's study of anticoagulant poisoning effects on wildlife in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and adjacent parkland.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant in an amount not to exceed \$15,000 from the Conservancy Fund to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) on behalf of the National Park Service for study of anticoagulant poisoning effects on wildlife in the National Recreation Area and adjoining parklands.

Legislative Authority: Section 33204 and Section 33211(c) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, has submitted a request to the Conservancy for assistance with an important study on the alarming effects of commonly used rodenticides on a wide variety of Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills wildlife species. Because of limitations in making a grant directly to a federal agency (the National Park Service), MRCA has been proposed to be the grant recipient to facilitate the needed scientific study on behalf of NPS.

Dr. Ray Sauvajot of the Park Service and his NPS mammal tracking team have identified a number of deaths of large and small mammal species, including mountain lions, attributed directly or indirectly to the effects of anticoagulant rodent poisons. Raptorial birds may also be at risk. The purpose of the two-year study is to further evaluate the wildlife effects and the extent of exposures in predator and prey species throughout the Santa Monica Mountains; how the poisons are getting into parkland natural ecosystems; and how they are moving through the food chain. Information produced from the study will also be useful in providing accurate information to the public and to pesticide/rodenticide applicators, with the hope of ultimately reducing an increasing accumulation of anticoagulant poisons in local parklands and ecosystems. The long term viability of predators is crucial for ecosystem health in the thousands of acres of public parklands preserved at great expense by the Conservancy, National Park Service, California State Parks, and others.

Other collaborators and funders include the University of California at Davis Department of Veterinary Medicine, US Environmental Protection Agency, UCLA, National Science Foundation, NPS, and Western National Parks Association. A grant from the Conservancy to MRCA would allow the SMMNRA to continue with bobcat work in the Western Santa Monica Mountains, accelerate blood-based screening techniques, and expand small mammal/prey species monitoring. The Conservancy grant is important to help secure matching funds from the National Park Service and future year funding from the Western National Parks Association.

Please see also the attached letter from the Park Service. The Conservancy Fund is a repository for donations and settlements that may come in from time to time, and is an appropriate funding source for assisting MRCA with this National Park Service endeavor.